2. Dhanbad-Patherdih-Sudamdih railway line (Eastern Rly)

(a) At Lodna isolation trench and cement grouting through boreholes have been done to protect the track.

(b) At Bagdigi and Bararee mines isolation trench and blanketing with Matti have been done as preventive measures against advance of fire.

(c) At Lodna-south Lodna fire, a scheme to deal with fires which will protect the railway line is under implementation at an estimated cost of Rs 3.34 crores.

(d) At Sudamdih eastern edge XI/XII, XIV/XIVA seams have been blanketed to control the fire advancing towards the railway track.

(3) Adra-Gomoh Railway Line (S.E Rly)

(i) At Gopulichak Colliery isolation trench upto XVI seam floor has been made in addition to the surface sealing to control the progress of fire.

Target Utilisation of Pots of Smeltor Plant, Angul

5572. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state what are the reasons for which the NALCO would not achieve the target of utilising of all 480 pots of Smeltor Plant of Angul till March, 2000?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR.(SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): NALCO could not utilise all of its 480 pots in the Smeltor Plant at Angul earlier to March, 2000 because of various factors: a shortage of power, till the 6th unit of the captive power plant was commissioned in 1994; constraints in the anode plant, till the debottlenecking in the carbon plant was completed during 1996-97. Over the years, more pots were brought into operation as NALCO improved its capacity to handle huge quantity of hot metal by addition of its billet, sow and strip casting facilities.

Revision of Rates of Royalty on Lignite

5573. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Gujarat have represented to streamline the existing system of fising rates of royalty;

(b) if so, whether the Central Government propose for setting up of a statutory body of experts for revision of rates of royalty; and

(c) whether a decision has been taken to revise the rate of royalty for lignite every three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) The Government of Gujarat have represented to the Central Government to enhance the royalty rate on lignite to the level of E grade of non-coking coal.

(b) The issues of revision of royalty rates of coal and lignite have already been considered by two study groups constituted in the department of Coal separately for coal and lignite and these study groups have submitted their reports to the Department. Hence no proposal of setting up of a statutory body of experts for revision of rates of royalty on coal and lignite is under consideration of the Central Government.

(c) No Sir. Under the existing provisions of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 royalty on minerals including coal and lignite cannot be enhanced more than once during any period of three years but this not imply that it has mandatorily to be revised every three years.

Closure of Kolar Gold Mines

5574. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 120 year old world famous Kolar Gold Mines are facing the threat of closure due to losses;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the work force has been asked to accept voluntary retirement or retrenchment;

(c) whether schemes like wagon and coach production, LPG bottling plant etc. have been suggested to avert retrenchment; and

(d) if so, the rection of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) to (d) Bharat Gold Mines Ltd. (BGML) was referred to Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) in 1992 when the Company became sick in terms of provisions of Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 (SICA). As efforts to rehabilitate BGML including through the joint venture route were not successful the Government felt that revival of the Company was not feasible. The Government submitted to the BIFR that it would have no objection to